Legal aid to poor persons belonging to SC/ST

*156. SHRI MOHINDER SINGH KALYAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) what is the nature of legal aid provided to poor persons belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities under the Legal Aid Programme;

(b) whether special attention is given to criminal cases, cases relating to immovable properties and labour disputes under the above programme;

(c) whether monetary assistance is also given to the above communities when they are faced with these cases; and

(d) the details of the budget allocations made for the purpose during the last three years ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ) : (a) and (b) Ordinarily, Legal Aid is provided to every person whose annual income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 6,000/- upto High Court level and Rs. 12,000/- in regard to cases in the Supreme Court. However, this limitation as to income is not applicable to persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Those belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are entitled to free legal aid right from the Munsiff's Court to the Supreme Court in all types of cases, civil, criminal as well as labour disputes. Free Legal Service includes expenses in regard to Advocates fees; court fees; drafting charges; preparation of paperbooks, affidavits; typing expenses and the like including summoning of witnesses etc.

(c) Since all expenses connected with litigation is paid out of legal aid funds, the question of granting any other monetary assistance does not arise.

(d) The Central Government provided the following budget for implementation of Legal Aid Programme during the last three financial years :—

1989-90 : 64.07 lakhs
1990-91 : Rs. 68.00 lakhs
1991-92 : Rs. 59.90 lakhs

Introduction of Computer System at Passport Office, Jalandhar

*157. SHRI BALBIR SINGH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to introduce Computer-system in the Jalandhar Passport office taking into consideration the heavy rush of applications;

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be implemented; and

(c) if not, what other steps would be taken for expediting the early disposal of Passport applications ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA) : (a) and (b) A phased programme of computerisation of all Passport Offices in India has been started and efforts are being made to complete this in the shortest time possible.

(c) Apart from computerisation, the Government has initiated a number of measures to reduce delays in the issue of passports. The measures inter-alia include an increase in the supply of passport booklets, creation of additional posts to augment the staff strength in the Passport Offices and streamlining of procedures for the issue of passports.

Pecuniary Jurisdiction of District Courts in Delhi

158. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to increase the pecuniary jurisdiction of District Courts in Delhi from Rs. 1 lakh to 5 lakhs,

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Delhi High Court Lawyers and the New Delhi Bar Association are agitating for the Division of subordinate Civil Courts into 5 districts; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir. A notification to this effect has been issued on 9-11-92.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The modality of division of the Delhi District Court is receiving Government's attention on priority basis.

Reviewed of Drought Prone Area Programme

*159. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have critically reviewed the Drought Prone Area Programme since its inception; if so, the findings of the review in general and Maharashtra—in particular;

(b) what was the base year for identification of D.P.A.P. areas and the criteria to decide the chronically droughts prone areas along with the number of districts initially selected and added later on, yearwise;

(c) whether the criteria and the areas identified have undergone changes from time to time over the last twenty years;

(d) whether the areas after intensive planning and heavy investment as compared to other adjacent districts have remained chronically drought affected even now;

(e) whether Government propose to consider to select other districts—equally drought affected and having more severity of drought; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) A Task Force constituted by Planning Commission (Minhas Committee) reviewed the rural development programmes including DPAP in 1973. The Task Force recommended that DPAP should aim at integrated development of agriculture with focus on restoration of ecological balance. Apart from irrigation, forestry, soil and moisture conservation, it recommended changes in agronomic practices and restructuring of cropping pattern, livestock development, rural communication and drinking water supply as important elements of the strategy of Integrated Rural Development in drought prone areas.

The programme was once again reviewed by the Task Force (Swaminathan Committee) in 1982. The Task Force endorsed the on-going approach and strategy but redefined the scope and objectives of the programme. Emphasis was laid on more productive agriculture, dryland as well as irrigated and vegetative cover. Some activities like drinking water supply, rural communication, assistance to small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers which are taken care of under other schemes were excluded from the purview of DPAP. The Task Force also evolved the criteria for identification of area on the basis of rainfall and irrigation factor.

As regard Maharashtra there is no specific finding or recommendations in these reviews.

(b) and (c) DPAP was launched in 1973-74 which formed the base year for identification of drought prone areas. The Task Force, 1973 divided drought prone areas into following three categories :

(i) Areas with rainfall of 375 mm or less covering 9 districts of Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat.

(ii) Areas having rainfall between 375 mm to 750 mm covering 18 districts of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Jammu & Kashmir.

(iii) Areas having rainfall exceeding 750 mm comprising 27 districts in the States of Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Madya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal.